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AIDS TO AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHERS

and flowers. I suppose they will never do it, because they will protest that the ground is worth a guinea an inch, or something equally contemptible.

'Well, at any rate, I wish they would put a spire on the Abbey,' said the Other. 'I was delighted to see the *Daily Mail* set the idea going.'

'Ah, now if you could get *that* scheme afloat you would be doing something,' said the First.

'Well I have gone into the question very thoroughly,' said the Other, 'but we will not talk about it now. Let us wait till we have a quiet evening. Of course it will cost a pile of money.'

The Third who had been blinking at the fire all this time without uttering a word now rose to go. 'I should like to hear what you have got to say about it,' he remarked. 'Get your leave, settle your plans, and then come to me.'

Vox.

AIDS TO AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHERS

DURING the past month careful amateurs have been preparing for the spring light to secure negatives. It is well known that the month of May is generally *the* month for those who use snapshot cameras. The light is at the strongest, and care should be exercised or over-exposure will be the result.

As many of our readers are just beginning to try a camera, it may be mentioned that by looking over the back numbers of this journal some hints will be found given to those who have no knowledge of photography. Since those were printed there have been several improvements in apparatus and materials. The Kodak Company have made the Cartridge Kodak (No. 4) a very good instrument for the money, and the films are better. A new printing out paper (Cross Swords brand) has appeared which promises to be better than any on the market, and it is to be hoped that the makers will keep the quality up to the sample tried. Sichels' self-toning paper is good for those who wish to get sepia tones with little trouble. The Platinotype Company still occupy the first place for excellence in their beautiful paper, which appeals to all who desire truly artistic effects.

Of course it must be clearly understood that to obtain a good print a good negative must be secured, and the glass plate has not yet been superseded. Those who must of necessity confine their attempts to the hand camera, and who can afford it, should buy the No. 2 Binocular, which can be had with several improvements and 'Zeiss' lens for a very reasonable figure. The

camera is for plates and is not recommended for films, and as there are several patterns, the one with the indicator at the base of the camera is the best. The maker's guarantee should also be enquired for. These cameras can now be had in London at the same prices as those charged in Paris, which have always been below those asked in London.

Presuming that a good lens is used, now is the time to make negatives for use hereafter. Several negatives have been sent in plainly showing that the worker has been very impatient and has taken the negatives out of the developer too soon, the result being under-development. This applies chiefly to Paget plates and the excellent formula given by the Paget Company. This particular brand when developed with Eikonogen will bear prolonged development without fogging, and though appearing almost black when held to the lamp, will clear wonderfully when placed in the Hyposulphite of Soda to fix. In the case of under-exposure, care should be taken to cover the plate, even in a room properly lighted, and to keep the dish in motion all the time the negative is under treatment, or stains will result. Another important point is to be quite sure the negative is properly fixed, in many cases indeed twenty minutes will not be too long for the plate to be kept in the Hypo.

This reminds the writer of a case in which an amateur found that all his negatives were defective, and the fault was ultimately traced to his dark-room lamp. It was a cheap and worth-

ART CENTRES

less affair, purchased at some place that sold coals, tin tacks, and watches, but in spoiled plates it cost him more than if he had purchased one of the finest ever built. The gentleman behind the counter assured him that it was a beautiful article and would 'wear well,' evidently thinking of his late department on the ladies' side of the building. The remains of this lamp can be had at a low figure. These remarks are intended to warn amateurs that they can easily waste a great deal of money, especially by buying cheap tools at places that know as much about chemistry, optics, and the sciences of use in photography as the family cat. Be wise, go to a respectable place, be guided by those who have a reputation to keep and who make it their business to know; pay a fair price and get the best tools you can, even if you can only afford a few, but remember, a defective lamp, a leaky camera and a poor lens means loss of money, time and temper whenever you buy a box of plates or a roll of film.

Fast plates do not keep as well as slow plates and need a much more careful handling. Red is not safe alone, you must have yellow as well, either fabric or glass. What the best workers use is generally ruby glass and yellow fabric, and even then keep the developing dish at a good distance from the lamp.

Isochromatic plates must be used as fresh as possible, and most amateurs prepare their own plates. Those who cannot do this can always get fresh ones from Messrs. Edwards; but dealers should always date plates and films, and

if amateurs would insist on this being done, there would be far less disappointment and pecuniary loss.

It is also well to remember that in starting it is the cheapest in the end to take advice from some one who has had actual experience, and to be content with a small picture until accustomed to the work. It has been mentioned several times in these pages that Amateur Photography is delightful and inexpensive if the worker is wise and does not mind a little trouble, but is quite the reverse if cheap—often useless—things are bought, and above all don't buy 'complete outfits,' they are often quite worthless. A large case was sent to the writer, which had been purchased by a gentleman. He had gone to a shop and said he wanted to take a few pictures of his horses; the obliging young man induced him to take a camera—which he never could understand—and a 'complete outfit.' The bill came to £28. I know something about cameras and think the particular one now before me dear at as many shillings, since it is quite useless. The outfit is magnificent to look at, but is too elaborate for an ordinary mortal. Even the lens is not of much use, as it requires to be stopped down to f22 to get anything like a picture.

We may mention that any of our readers who cannot get help or would like more direct advice may enquire through THE ARTIST, and state what is needed. We shall do our best to give the best advice and help we can.

JOHN LE COUTEUR.

ART CENTRES

LONDON.—FRITZ THAULOW AT THE GOUPILOFF GALLERY.—Those who went to the International Art Exhibition last year were especially charmed with three pictures by Fritz Thaulow, who up to that time had been comparatively little seen in England, though his work has long been familiar enough in France. This admirable collection at the Goupil Gallery, though it will probably be closed before this note appears, has therefore served a purpose in putting Herr Thaulow's work before us in a more complete way. Fritz Thaulow, with all his cleverness in technical work, that is to

say with all his French skill, is still quite northern in inspiration. I do not know any one who succeeds in getting such a *swirl* into his water, nor such colour and depth and strength.

GASTON LA TOUCHE AT THE FINE ARTS SOCIETY.—There is no doubt whatever about Mons. La Touche's individuality, but is it wholly admirable? Frankly I do not think it is. He is an astonishingly powerful colourist, he is really a *great* colourist; he does with water-colours things more strong, more daring, more telling than most men can do in oils. But in much of his work, indeed in his work on the whole, there is a false ring. One feels that the